

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
May 7, 2018 – 4 p.m.
New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: David Robinson, Chair
Tom Maddux
John Lloyd

Members Absent: Marco Boyce
John Antonio

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

Mr. Robinson called for a roll call.

Minutes – A motion was made to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2018, meeting as amended. The motion was seconded and approved.

New Applications

2018-05 – 130 East 3rd Street – Mr. William G. Blest

Mr. Blest submitted an Application to have a tree planted. He is open to species and size. It was determined that there were no utility lines that a tree would interfere with. A Ginkgo tree was suggested. Mr. Robinson suggested the Commission approve the Application pending Mr. Blest reviewing the Tree List to select the species he wanted, and if Mr. Blest does not wish to select the tree, the Commission will select the species.

A Motion to have Application 2018-05 be approved was made, seconded and passed.

Public Comments

Ms. Joan Smith asked for a status update of the request she made in September 2017 to plant trees across from her house on 8th Street. Mr. Robinson noted that the Commission had not made any determination on her Application. Ms. Smith advised that she had spoken with the property owner, and he is agreeable to trees being planted on his property. Mr. Lloyd verified the location as South Street to Delaware Street. Mr. Robinson noted there were transmission lines on the property and the Railroad right-of-way to consider. Mr. Lloyd noted the Railroad right-of-way was of varied width, and he wasn't sure what it was on that side. He felt the right-of-way for the transmission line was a bigger concern, and that Delmarva would not agree to having anything planted under the transmission lines. Mr. Robinson questioned what Delmarva would consider being under the power lines and how much latitude there was to plant trees. Mr. Lloyd advised there was an easement to consider, and depending on the voltage, the easement could go all the way to the railroad tracks. Mr. Lloyd suggested that Crepe Myrtles would be very nice, and Ms. Smith agreed. Mr. Robinson noted that the current budget was gone, but the request could be added to next year's budget, and the Commission would have ample funding in the fall. Ms. Smith noted that the property in question is very unattractive, especially since it is down the street from the new Memorial. Ms. Alison Ellicott added that trees would make the area look much nicer. The Commission agreed to make a commitment to have plantings done on the site. Mr. Lloyd advised that if the property owner is agreeable, the Commission would get approval from Norfolk Southern and Delmarva. Mr. Lloyd will contact Delmarva and advise Ms. Smith of the outcome of the conversation. Mr. Robinson noted that nothing would be done until the fall.

Miscellaneous

7th & South – Mrs. Octavio previously submitted an application to have a tree removed and replaced. The Commission approved the Application and the tree was removed. Mrs. Octavio has not replaced the tree, and wants the City to replant a new tree. Mr. Robinson advised that Mr. Barthel would need to make the decision for the City to pay for a new tree. Mrs. Octavio requested a Japanese Maple Tree; however that tree is not on the Tree List. Mr. Lloyd noted there was also a guidewire to consider. After discussing a number of tree options, it was agreed the Commission would approve a request to have the City plant either a Japanese Lilac or a Crepe Myrtle. In the alternative, Mrs. Octavio would have the option to purchase a tree of her choice and have it planted. Mr. Robinson will communicate the recommendation to Mrs. Octavio.

Flagpole – Mr. Lloyd advised the Holly could be trimmed, or cut down. He noted that if it is top trimmed; there will be a lot of vertical shoots which would make the tree very unattractive. It was suggested that the Holly tree be removed and base plantings or a series of flowering trees be planted instead. After discussion, it was suggested the Commission recommend the Holly tree be removed and new plantings be determined after the area has been cleared.

A Motion to have the Holly Tree removed and new plantings be determined after a review of the cleared site was made, seconded and approved.

Updates

3rd and Delaware - The Lions are anxious to replace the Ash Tree that was removed at the corner of 3rd and Delaware. The Commission previously approved an American elm tree as the replacement. Mr. Robinson asked Ron Vukelich if he could obtain a tree. The Commission would have the tree planted by either the City or Mr. Vukelich. The Lions would reimburse the cost.

Arbor Day – MSC planted six very large Red Maple trees and two Crepe Myrtle trees. Mr. Robinson has not heard any comment on the plantings. He also noted all the Crepe Myrtle trees have been planted on Rt. 9.

Washington Street Trees – Mr. Robinson and Mr. Maddux pruned the suckers so there are just the three main stems. A resident inquired if the trees on Washington Street would be mulched in the same manner as the trees on Rt. 9. Mr. Robinson spoke with Mr. George O’Neil and the work is being done.

Rt. 273 Speed Limit – Ms. Linda Ratchford contacted the Chief of Police, and he did not see the need to reduce the speed, noting accidents on Rt. 273 were not due to speed, but to inattentive driving. DelDot will not do anything without a traffic survey, which they will not pay for, and the City cannot pass an ordinance to reduce the speed on State roads.

Sidewalk Repairs – Mr. Vukelich has begun repairs of tree root damage to sidewalks in the City. Mr. Robinson asked him to work on the Sycamore Tree on 2nd Street.

Mulching – Ms. Lois Barth submitted a letter regarding mulching of trees in the City. Mr. Robinson advised that the issues she noted were all on Trustee property. It was suggested that the Ordinance be revised to state that mature trees are not mulched. After discussion, it was decided to reach out to Mr. Barthel and have him contact Ms. Barth to respond to her concerns of mulching. Mr. Lloyd noted there is a section the Ordinance that speaks about the physical harm being applied to trees in the City, and over-

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mulching would fall under this Ordinance. Mr. Maddux will compose a communication to present to Mr. Barthel.

Budget – Ms. Ratchford asked that the Commission provide her with a communication regarding a budget request for next year. Mr. Lloyd noted that there is a huge tree maintenance requirement for the City that needs to be addressed in the new Budget. Mr. Robinson also noted that much of the maintenance should be done by an arborist. Mr. Lloyd recommended that a Street Tree Inventory be compiled including number of trees, species, size, and an area for tree maintenance history. Mr. Robinson did speak with Ms. Ratchford about a Tree Inventory, and advised the cost could be in the \$15,000-\$20,000 range.

Sub-Station Plantings – Mr. Lloyd asked for a response about the sub-station plantings. It was noted that MSC said they will do it, but it does not appear Delmarva has been contacted yet. Mr. Robinson noted that either Mr. Barthel or Mr. Casale had spoken with Delmarva, and were advised that they did not plan to do anything. Mr. Lloyd will contact Mr. Casale to see if violations can be written against the property. Mr. Lloyd also noted that there were a number of nice plantings that would go there and not interfere with wires at the sub-station.

There being no further business, Mr. Robinson asked for a Motion to adjourn the meeting.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 pm was made, seconded and approved.

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer